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INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREED CONCLUSIONS OF THE 1996 COORDINATION SEGMENT OF THE COUNCIL ON THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is in follow-up to the agreed conclusions 1996/1 on coordination of the United Nations system activities for poverty eradication, which were approved by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1996 (see A/51/3 (Part I), chap. III, sect. A). In paragraph 2, below, the report sets out seven recommendations; in paragraphs 3-74 below, details are provided on follow-up to specific issues addressed by agreed conclusions 1996/1 (paragraph numbers in parentheses and headings refer to the text of the agreed conclusions, which could not be reproduced here given the page limit).

Recommendations

2. The following recommendations are made with respect to part III of the agreed conclusions on a harmonized and integrated approach to intergovernmental consideration of poverty eradication:

(a) The Council needs to determine the date for an overall review of poverty eradication in order to contribute to the special session of the General Assembly in 2000 for the overall review of the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) (para. 36);

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(b) The Council should continue to enhance complementarity in the work of the functional commissions on cross-sectoral themes emanating from recent United Nations global conferences (para. 39);

(c) Given the different scheduling of sessions of the two bodies, the Commission for Social Development, in preparing for its future priority themes, may wish to request in advance specific inputs from the Commission on the Status of Women (para. 43);

(d) Functional commissions may wish to request that a gender perspective be reflected in the documents prepared by their secretariats, thus enabling them to reflect the gender implications in agreed conclusions, resolutions or other decisions (para. 44);

(e) The Council may wish to consider future arrangements for the contributions of the United Nations system to the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and other international conferences once the mandates of the inter-agency task forces have expired (para. 49);

(f) In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 50/161 and 51/202, in which the Assembly reiterated the Summit's call for Governments to assess on a regular basis national progress towards implementing the outcome of the Summit, possibly in the form of periodic national reports outlining successes, problems and obstacles, the Commission for Social Development may also wish to invite Governments to provide national reports in the context of its thirty-eighth session, in the year 2000, at which time it will make its contribution to the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. Coordination of poverty eradication activities at the field level should continue to be enhanced by all relevant organizations of the United Nations system (para. 52);

(g) The Commission for Social Development, when considering the theme "Social services for all" in 1999, may wish to place a particular focus on education, and in that case may consider inviting the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to serve as task manager for the preparation of that aspect of its priority subject. The Bureau of the Commission for Social Development could consult with the Bureau of the Commission on Population and Development to consider ways and means to cooperate in the overall review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), particularly in the area of social services for all (para. 53).

Agreed conclusions 1996/1 and follow-up

I. COORDINATED UNITED NATIONS SUPPORT AND AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES FOR POVERTY ERADICATION ACTIVITIES AT THE FIELD LEVEL

3. Country information confirms that numerous initiatives have been promoted by the United Nations system at the field level in support of poverty eradication. Considerable efforts are being made to coordinate them within the resident coordinator system. Nevertheless, more efforts are required to consolidated those attempts to more effectively harmonize programming activities

at the system-wide level and to increase the integration of such activities with the efforts of Governments and national society, enhancing their involvement.

A. Definition of a poverty eradication strategy

B. Resources for poverty eradication

International Development Association/resources for operational activities (para. 7)

4. Concern was expressed in the agreed conclusions at the replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA). In March 1996, an agreement was reached among IDA contributors for funding $22 billion over the three-year period beginning in July 1996 (IDA-11). The refunding agreement applies to the second and third years of the replenishment period. The first year is to be supported by an interim fund.

5. The funding for operational activities has remained stagnant. An analysis of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) resources approved for programming in 1994-1995 has shown that approximately 40 per cent of core funding was allocated to poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods. In order to accurately monitor the percentage of its development assistance allocated to poverty eradication, UNDP has developed a new programme classification system, which is being implemented for the Sixth Cycle (1997-1999). Most UNDP programmes will have been incorporated into the new classification system by early 1998, after which it will be easier to monitor the organization's commitment (in monetary terms) to poverty eradication, including gender dimensions. In order to make maximum use of its current programme funds for poverty eradication, UNDP has increased collaboration both at the headquarters and country levels with other parts of the United Nations system and the donor community to minimize duplication and rationalize each donor's assistance. It had also established a programming facility for poverty eradication to leverage additional funding, particularly from bilateral donors, to support the development of national poverty reduction strategies. The UNDP/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Board held a full discussion during its annual session in May 1997 on meeting the goals of ICPD and the consequences of resource shortfalls up to the year 2000. The Executive Board decided to continue its discussion of the matter, and requested UNFPA to further develop the conference room paper presented at the meeting into a formal submission at its next regular session, in September 1997. The World Food Programme (WFP) is committed to providing at least 90 per cent of its development assistance to low-income, food-deficit countries, and at least 50 per cent to the least developed countries. Because multilateral funding is declining and there is a tendency to become more dependent on directed multilateral contributions, WFP is intensifying its efforts to secure resources at the field level by ensuring that donor representatives are well informed of WFP activities and by broadening its donor base for the long term. See also the report of the Secretary-General on operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (E/1997/__).

Global targets/priority for social services (para. 8)

6. Total Development Assistance Committee (DAC) aid fell to 0.27 per cent of the combined gross national product (GNP) of DAC countries in 1995, far below the United Nations aid target of 0.7 per cent of GNP. In an effort to explore new ways of generating financial resources, the Economic and Social Council will discuss the topic "New and innovative ideas for generating funds" during the general segment (see the report of the Secretary-General on new and innovative ideas for generating funds (E/1997/__)). The secretariat of the Micro Credit Summit (see A/52/113-E/1997/18), held in Washington D.C., from 2 to 4 February 1997, is expecting an institutional action plan for attaining Summit objectives from each United Nations agency by February 1998.

7. In the preparation of Sixth Cycle programming, UNDP country offices are actively encouraging Governments to allocate significant portions of UNDP programme funds to poverty eradication. Of those countries that have completed their Sixth Cycle Country Cooperation Framework (nine countries prior to the second regular session of the Executive Board in 1997), all contain poverty eradication as a main area of programme focus. Gender equality is also a major programme area, with strong links to poverty eradication. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has used technical assistance to assist member countries in the area of capacity-building, as well as providing advice on public expenditure patterns that protect outlays on education, health, and basic social services. Different types of social safety nets directed at various groups, including women and children, are also incorporated in structural economic programmes.

C. Commitment to coordination of poverty eradication activities

Coordination at headquarters and in the field (para. 9)

8. Inter-agency collaboration for poverty reduction ranges from United Nations system support to poverty surveys and the preparation of poverty profiles and assessments etc. to support for grass-roots initiatives in poverty-stricken areas, people's participation and empowerment programmes, and support in formulating national poverty eradication strategies. The Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) took note of the broad responsibilities envisaged by agreed conclusions 1996/1 for the resident coordinator system which needed to be taken into account in the provision of integrated guidance both to country teams and from individual organizations to their field representatives. The Committee would be monitoring developments both through its working group on the resident coordinator system and in its preparation of the 1998 triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development.

D. Common country assessment

Joint efforts in information collection and analysis/extension of CCA (para. 10)

9. As part of the work being fed into the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) common country assessment exercise, in which participating organizations

are collaborating to produce a core set of situation analysis indicators corresponding to the main components of their mandates, a first technical support document has been produced by UNDP, entitled "Poverty definitions and indicators", which examines different ways of defining poverty and takes stock of the array of indicators used for its measurement. It synthesizes the latest thinking in this field, drawing on work done by other parts of the United Nations system and the academic and non-governmental organization communities, and points to areas where greater work is required. To operationalize its poverty reduction mandate in a coherent manner, a second document on that subject will lay out the UNDP conceptual framework for defining poverty, including a comprehensive approach for poverty measurement and monitoring beyond traditional income indicators. The extension of the common country assessment to the United Nations system will be pursued in the context of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120.

System-wide approach to support monitoring by Governments (para. 11)

10. With regard to monitoring and assessment by national Governments, the General Assembly, in its resolution 51/202 on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, reiterated the Summit's call for Governments to assess on a regular basis national progress towards implementing the outcome of the Summit, possibly in the form of periodic national reports outlining successes, problems and obstacles, and encouraged Governments to submit such information on a voluntary basis to the Commission for Social Development.

E. Increase of national capacity to develop indicators and assess data

Providing assistance for national capacity for poverty analysis and technical assistance to developing countries and transition economies (para. 12)

11. The ACC inter-agency task forces on follow-up to the recent United Nations conferences and the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality have reaffirmed the importance of developing a common set of indicators for measuring the progress made at the country level for the follow-up to United Nations conferences. A substantial number of projects funded by the UNDP Poverty Strategies Initiative are assisting national partners in assessing the magnitude and distribution of poverty nationwide, by providing support to household surveys, poverty assessments, human development reports and other mapping and analysis exercises. Emphasis is being placed on supplementing income and expenditure data with more qualitative indicators of poverty, gathering and analysing data disaggregated down to the district or provincial level, and strengthening national and subnational capacities for poverty mapping and measurement. UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank have initiated collaboration on poverty indicators and monitoring with a view to strengthening capacity to gather and analyse information on and develop indicators of social development (see A/51/348, para. 67). UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank have established an informal working group on poverty monitoring. The current work programme

explores quantitative and qualitative data-collection methodologies with the aim of building national capacity for monitoring poverty. The same working group has also actively sought the production of a core set of welfare indicators to limit the survey duplication that currently exists between the three organizations. The core questionnaire would be supplemented by a set of flexible modules on various poverty-related topics designed to be used and adapted, as desired, by individual countries. UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank are also seeking ways to share experiences on poverty monitoring and to better coordinate the work of the three organizations, for example, through a joint poverty monitoring website on the Internet. UNDP has produced a technical support document entitled "From data collection to poverty assessments" which draws on work done by other parts of the United Nations system, such as the National Household Survey Capability Programme, the World Bank, UNICEF, the ILO and IFAD. WFP has introduced vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) to analyse the vulnerability of target populations to food insecurity and of their capacities for coping with disaster. The results are used by WFP in its long-term strategic and contingency planning, project identification and design, and target assistance. The VAM unit of WFP collaborates with the Global Information and Early Warning System of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Famine Early Warning System of the United States Agency for International Development and non-governmental organizations.

12. To help to improve the effectiveness of public projects and programmes, including social programmes, IMF has provided extensive policy advice and technical assistance on public expenditure management to both developing and transition economies. In some countries in Latin America, that assistance was provided explicitly within the context of the design of a medium-term poverty reduction strategy. The assistance has sought to establish institutions and procedures to monitor, control and evaluate public expenditures. Technical assistance and policy advice have been provided also in connection with IMF-supported adjustment programmes to integrate fiscally sustainable social safety nets into those programmes to counter the adverse short-term effects of certain adjustment measures on the poor. For example, technical assistance and policy advice have been provided to several transition economies experiencing large changes in prices and employment to improve the targeting of subsidies and to restructure pensions, unemployment compensation and other social benefits. In seven countries with economies in transition, UNESCO has commissioned reviews of the present status of poverty and methodology for the measurement of poverty.

F. Gender analysis

Integrating a gender perspective (para. 13)

See follow-up to part II of agreed conclusions 1996/1, as set out below.

G. Country strategy note

CSN and coordination of poverty eradication activities (paras. 14 and 15)

13. To date, 26 country strategy notes have been completed and adopted. Another 34 countries are expected to complete them in the near future. Since most of the 26 completed country strategy notes have been finalized only in the last year, no comprehensive analysis has yet been done on their content.

Giving high priority to poverty eradication activities (para. 16)

14. All resident coordinators have been asked to highlight, in their annual reports for 1996, the United Nations system's achievements in the field of poverty alleviation. CCPOQ decided to undertake an analysis and assessment of country-level initiatives by the resident coordinator system in the field of poverty eradication, based in particular on the resident coordinators' annual reports for 1996, for review by the Committee at its eleventh regular session, in September 1997.

Improving coordination through the resident coordinator system (para. 17)

15. The Poverty Strategies Initiative was launched by UNDP in March 1996 to support country implementation of the World Summit for Social Development, as contained in paragraphs 26 (b) and 26 (d) of the Summit's Programme of Action: (a) the formulation of national poverty eradication plans and strategies; and (b) the elaboration of national definitions, measurements, criteria and indicators of absolute poverty. The Initiative is financed from UNDP core resources ($11 million) and bilateral donor contributions to a trust fund established to support the achievement of the anti-poverty objectives of the Summit (to date $9 million). The initiative is now being offered in over 70 countries. More than half of the projects are for low-income countries, and about one third for least developed countries. In terms of the human development index (HDI), more than 50 per cent of the projects have come from countries with medium HDIs, and 30 per cent from countries with low HDIs.

H. Field-level committee

Review of programmes and projects of United Nations system by the field-level committee (para. 18)

16. Efforts have been made by the field-level committees to devote more attention to the review of substantive activities, although such review has yet to be conducted in a regular and systemic way. Nevertheless, the field-level committees continue to serve as a United Nations coordinating mechanism in the countries concerned.

I. Thematic groups

Promoting the establishment of thematic groups (para. 19)

17. The resident coordinators, in close cooperation with agency representatives, are charged with establishing thematic groups that will draw on but not necessarily be identical to the inter-agency task forces. Many thematic groups were formed around preparation and follow-up to the global conferences. Inter-agency collaboration and coordination may represent a basis for harmonized programming and evaluation, especially by JCGP partners, but is seldom extended to the programming level. Frequently, United Nations system collaboration for poverty eradication has elicited the support of the other development partners, including bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations.

J. Programme approach

Use of programme approach (para. 20)

18. A desk review of 65 country offices revealed that 37 per cent had at least one programme support document, the majority of which were in Africa. However, that percentage rises to 52 per cent when project documents used in a programme approach manner are included. Of those programmes/projects, 69 per cent were in support of poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods (many of which included the gender dimensions of poverty and livelihoods). By definition, those programmes/projects were developed in close collaboration with the United Nations system and other development partners, guided by a national programme framework. The programme approach is still implemented in a different way by each individual United Nations system organization. There is a clear interest in the programme approach at the country level, but some countries are choosing to implement the approach in stages, picking out and utilizing specific elements according to their needs. The resulting different types of programmes will form future modifications and refinements of the programme approach.

K. Cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions

Strengthening collaboration between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions (paras. 21 and 22)

19. There is increased collaboration between IMF and the World Bank and other United Nations institutions, both in technical assistance on expenditure management and policy and in designing social expenditure components of economic reform programmes. The staffs of the World Bank and IMF also prepared a paper for the Development Committee in 1995 to discuss the implications of the World Summit for Social Development. Efforts continue to be made to facilitate an effective use of the round-table meetings and consultative group meetings.

L. Inter-agency coordination efforts

Reporting the work of task forces/providing coherent support at the national level (para. 23)

20. See the report of ACC on integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major international United Nations conferences and summits (E/1997/__), which, pursuant to Council resolution 1996/36, reports on the work of the three inter-agency task forces, as well as the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development and the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, and identifies policy and coordination issues to be addressed by the Council and the General Assembly. The prime objective of the task forces is to ensure that from the headquarters level, support is provided to the resident coordinators and the United Nations country team in each country so that they may effectively assist the Government and national institutions in their pursuit of conference goals and commitments. The other objective of the task forces is to assure that there is a coherent and common understanding within the United Nations system of goals and commitments, and to that end to provide coordinated support at the country and regional levels.

Ensuring coherence and avoiding duplication in the coordinated follow-up to conferences (para. 24)

21. ACC decided to undertake at its second regular session of 1997, a comprehensive assessment of overall progress to date in promoting the coordinated follow-up to conferences. As part of its review, ACC will assess (a) the effective utilization of the end products, including indicators, of the task forces; (b) the regular updating and feedback on follow-up activities at the country level, and on attainment of goals established by the conferences; (c) the streamlining of reporting requirements and mechanisms, building on existing reporting and information arrangements, and on common country assessments and on the concept of task managers and lead organizations and (d) experience gained and lessons learned from the use of flexible mechanisms, such as the task forces, for carrying out specific tasks under ACC. A workshop will be convened possibly in September 1997, to review the outputs of the task forces and other bodies to ensure coherence and interlinkages among them, particularly as to guidance for the resident coordinator system and on the continued coordination of the follow-up to recent United Nations global conferences.

Applying a gender perspective (para. 24)

22. The Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality designated the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and UNFPA as its focal points with three inter-agency task forces. They are expected to participate in the meetings of the three task forces to ensure that the work of the task forces reflects the gender perspective, and to report back to the Committee on the progress made in the work of each task force.

Task Force on an Enabling Environment for Economic and Social Development (para. 25)

23. The objective of the Task Force on an Enabling Environment for Economic and Social Development is to establish a synthesis of best practices or lessons learned in order to clarify the elements of an enabling environment for economic and social development, establish mechanisms for improving inter-agency coordination in support of such an environment, and provide respective constituents with standardized inter-agency performance indicators of social and economic progress that represent the development agenda reflected in the outcome of the major conferences. The Task Force established three subgroups on capacity-building for governance (UNDP as Chair), macroeconomic and social framework (World Bank as Chair) and indicators (Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis of the United Nations Secretariat as Chair).

Task Force on Full Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods (para. 25)

24. The ACC Task Force on Full Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods was established to assess policies on employment and sustainable livelihoods, provide lessons from experience, and demonstrate the potential of the United Nations system working together to support an individual country's pursuit of alternative policies towards full employment and sustainable livelihoods. The Task Force decided to carry out employment policy reviews in seven countries (Chile, Hungary, Nepal, Morocco, Zambia, Indonesia and Mozambique) in close association with United Nations organizations present in each country. The key lessons from the experience of even the few countries covered reaffirms the view that although market reforms are essential for sustainable employment growth and poverty alleviation, they are unlikely to be sufficient, especially in countries with high levels of poverty and inequality. They need to be supplemented by policies and programmes designed to strengthen the capacity of key groups, including the poor, especially through exercising their right to organize and bargain collectively. Other policies include a greater effort at human resources development, including entrepreneurship development, credit schemes, extension services and promotion of the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises and microenterprises.

United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and United Nations New Agenda for Development of Africa in the 1990s (para. 26)

25. At its two regular sessions of 1996, ACC reviewed the progress achieved since the launching of the Special Initiative, and formulated a number of conclusions and recommendations to guide the further implementation of the Initiative. ACC paid particular attention to the need to link the Special Initiatives as an instrument of implementation to the United Nations New Agenda for Development of Africa in the 1990s (see also ACC/1996/4, paras. 5-22; and ACC/1996/20, paras. 29-31).

II. MAINSTREAMING THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES FOR POVERTY ERADICATION

For further details, see the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming of gender perspectives (E/1997/__).

Integrating a gender perspective into the follow-up to conferences and poverty eradication activities (para. 28)

26. Mainstreaming a gender perspective implies by definition that all should be involved, share responsibilities and be accountable; much remains to be done in that regard. The Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality has pursued mainstreaming as a key priority. More specific follow-up activities on mainstreaming a gender perspective are reported in the reports of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming of gender perspectives (E/1997/__), progress in implementation on General Assembly resolution 50/120 (E/1997/__) and coordinated follow-up to conferences (E/1997/__).

Mainstreaming a gender perspective in macroeconomic and microeconomic policies (para. 28 (a))

27. Technical assistance and policy advice have been provided in connection with IMF-supported adjustment programmes to integrate fiscally sustainable social safety nets into those programmes to counter adverse short-term effects of certain adjustment measures on various groups, including women and children.

Exchange of information among United Nations organizations (para. 28 (b))

28. The United Nations system collaborated in preparing the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming of gender perspectives into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system (E/1997/__), which will be before the Council at its coordination segment in 1997. Collaboration and exchange of information is also taking place through the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE).

Use of data disaggregated by sex and statistical indicators (para. 28 (c) and (d))

29. The JCGP Gender Subgroup is currently working on developing gender equality indicators as an input to the common country assessment exercise. UNDP and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) are collaborating on a study of the gender dimensions of poverty based on a set of conceptual papers on poverty/gender indicators; a series of country studies will then be undertaken to assess the impact of development strategies on women. See also the follow-up to paragraph 58 of agreed conclusions 1996/1, as set out below, and the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming of gender perspectives (E/1997/__).

Gender impact analysis (para. 28 (e))

30. On gender analysis, at a United Nations inter-agency workshop hosted by UNDP from 4 to 7 March 1997, an agreement was reached to collaborate on the

development of common capacity-building tools for gender analysis and gender training, for use at the country level.

Integration of gender perspective into monitoring operational activities (para. 28 (f))

31. IACWGE agreed that it would follow carefully and would monitor regularly progress made throughout the United Nations system in incorporating a gender perspective in institutional structures, and in policies and programming. It also took steps to ensure that inter-agency task forces set up by ACC for integrated conference follow-up fully reflect a gender perspective in their work, including at the country level (see E/CN.6/1997/7, para. 28; see also the report of ACC on coordinated follow-up to conferences (E/1997/__)).

Dissemination of information on mainstreaming a gender perspective/training on gender issues (para. 28 (g) and (h))

32. The report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/51/322) highlights the need for further conceptual work, as well as for the development of practical tools, including training, to enable all staff of the United Nations system to apply a gender perspective in their day-to-day work. Methodologies for gender training are being developed, sometimes collaboratively by a number of United Nations entities, which are to be shared by all entities to create a common database for use by all agencies.

Increasing the participation of women in policy design and implementation (para. 29)

33. Efforts continue to be made to increase the percentage of women in the Secretariat and the United Nations system, including in the areas of poverty. IACWGE will consider the staffing issues of the United Nations system for improving the status of women and gender training. It held an in-depth exchange on the status of women in the secretariats, based on a background paper that had been prepared jointly by the Focal Point on Women in the Secretariat and the secretariats of the International Civil Service Commission and the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions. A number of proposals were made to strengthen linkages, set priorities and proceed in a strategic manner (see ACC/1996/22, para. 37). As for the country level, mechanisms to incorporate gender issues into programming and decision-making processes in country offices exist where there is a high-level commitment by senior management to gender issues, which serves to legitimize gender issues in the eyes of United Nations staff and development partners alike. Gender mainstreaming is most effective where there is intersectoral programming. Furthermore, the inclusion of a wide range of civil society actors helps to ensure that the voices and visions of women at the grass-roots level are brought into the policy-making process.

Collaboration between focal points in units of the Secretariat and women/gender units (para. 30)

34. Although cooperation exists between focal points in all units of the Secretariat related to poverty and women/gender units, including through IACWGE,

no comprehensive assessment has yet been made of the extent to which such cooperation is taking place.

Role of the Economic and Social Council in monitoring activities of the United Nations system (para. 31)

35. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/203, invited the Council to consider devoting one high-level segment, one coordination segment, and one operational activities segment to the advancement of women and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Accordingly, as the cross-sectoral theme at its coordination segment of 1997, the Council will consider the mainstreaming of the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system.

36. Information about intergovernmental and United Nations system activities in support of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action is provided on an annual basis to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly through the reports of the Secretary-General in the framework of Assembly resolution 50/203, Council resolution 1996/6 and Assembly resolution 51/69. Activities of the functional commissions that are relevant from a gender perspective will usually be reported to the Council so as to assist the Council in its coordination function in the integrated follow-up to all recent United Nations conferences and summits (see E/CN.6/1997/6, para. 25). It will be necessary to review the extent of mainstreaming a gender perspective in connection with poverty issues.

Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (para. 32)

37. IACWGE is drafting a mission statement for the United Nations system on advancement and empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming, for adoption by ACC. The Committee also plans to identify performance indicators, mechanisms for accountability and best practices, and will develop practical tools and approaches for mainstreaming and for monitoring and implementing the Platform for Action and the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001 (see E/CN.6/1997/2, para. 26). The Council has been provided with information on the work of IACWGE in the report of ACC on coordinated follow-up to conferences (E/1997/__).

Integrating a gender perspective at the field level (para. 33)

38. IACWGE has taken steps to ensure that the outputs of the task forces, such as their final reports or the guidelines for resident representatives, fully reflect a gender perspective, including direct or indirect participation in the discussions of case studies at the country level (see ACC/1996/22, para. 31) (see also the report of ACC on integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits (E/1997/__)).

III. A HARMONIZED AND INTEGRATED APPROACH TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONSIDERATION OF POVERTY ERADICATION

Harmonizing intergovernmental consideration of poverty eradication (para. 34)

39. The functional commissions have taken into account the guidance provided by the Council to harmonize their work related to poverty eradication. Greater efforts have been made to facilitate exchange of inputs among the commissions, enhance complementarity, and minimize overlap and duplication among them in this area (see also the follow-up to paras. 37 and 40-50 of agreed conclusions 1996/1, as set out above).

Role of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the functional commissions (para. 35)

40. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/161, decided that it would hold a special session in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and to consider further actions and initiatives.

41. In a letter dated 4 September 1996, the President of the Council conveyed agreed conclusions 1996/1 to the chairpersons of the functional commissions to draw the attention of the functional commissions to the conclusions so that they might take into account the guidance given by the Council. Similarly, a letter dated 10 September 1996 was sent from the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development to all ACC members, drawing their attention to relevant provisions of the agreed conclusions. The Secretariat prepared reports proposing actions to be taken by the functional commissions. The Commission for Social Development, in its decision 35/103 adopted at its thirty-fifth session, in March 1997, took note of the note by the Secretary-General on agreed conclusions 1996/1 (E/CN.5/1997/9), and further agreed to forward suggestions in that regard in a letter addressed by the Chairman to the President of the Council. The Commission on the Status of Women took explicit follow-up action in the form of a text submitted by the Chairperson (see E/CN.6/1997/L.17).

A. Strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council in providing an integrated approach to poverty eradication

Coordination by the Economic and Social Council (para. 36)

42. The Secretariat has included elements related to poverty eradication in its reports for the coordination segment of the Council's substantive session of 1997. Similar efforts will be made in preparing a report on the cross-cutting theme of the coordination segment in 1998 (see also the follow-up to para. 37 of agreed conclusions 1996/1, as set out above).

Overall review of poverty eradication by the Economic and Social Council/inputs from functional commissions (para. 37)

43. In accordance with Council resolution 1996/7 on the follow-up to the Summit and the future role of the Commission for Social Development, priority at the thirty-fifth session of the Commission in 1997 was given to productive employment and sustainable livelihoods, with a focus on three topics drawn from the Programme of Action of the Summit, one of which included improving access to productive resources and infrastructure, as defined in chapter II of the Programme of Action (Eradication of poverty). Priority at the thirty-sixth session of the Commission, in 1998, will be given to promoting social integration and participation of all people; at the thirty-ninth session, in 1999, the focus will be on social services for all. Those priority topics will include subtopics directly related to poverty eradication (see E/CN.9/1997/9, paras. 6-9).

44. The Commission on the Status of Women, in accordance with its multi-year work programme, will consider issues related to poverty eradication in 1998 within the framework of the review of the synthesized report of national action plans and of the mid-term review of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001. Thus, the Commission can provide an input to the overall review of the theme of poverty eradication to be undertaken by the Council (see E/CN.6/1997/L.17).

45. The Commission on Population and Development is scheduled to review health and mortality in 1998, with special emphasis on the linkages between health and development, and on gender and age. It is expected that that review will follow the structure of the ICPD Programme of Action, and will include a discussion of infant mortality and life expectancy, two indicators that have been shown to be closely associated with poverty. In 1999, the Commission will have under consideration a report on population growth, structure and distribution, with special emphasis on sustained economic growth and sustainable development, including population, sustained economic growth and poverty, as these are dealt with in chapter III of the ICPD Programme of Action. Also in 1999, the Commission will undertake a quinquennial review and appraisal of the progress made in achieving the goals and objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action and in implementing its recommendations, and will report its findings to the Council. Those reports can provide technical and focused inputs to the Council's overall review of poverty eradication at a date to be determined by the Council (see E/CN.9/1997/10, para. 7).

46. The approach taken by the Commission on Sustainable Development, in preparing for the 1997 special session of the General Assembly, was to take stock of progress reported by other bodies in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development, and outcomes of other conferences related to poverty. The Bureau recommended that the Secretariat transmit the report on chapter 3 of Agenda 21 prepared for the 1997 review as well as the relevant outcomes of the 1997 special session, to the Commission for Social Development when it considers matters related to the follow-up to the Summit.

47. The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1997/11 on human rights and extreme poverty, has requested the Secretary-General to convey the final

report on human rights and extreme poverty to, inter alia, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Reviewing the report of ACC (para. 38)

48. See the report of ACC on integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits (E/1997/__) (see also the follow-up to paras. 23-26 of agreed conclusions 1996/1, as set out above).

B. Functional commissions

Coordinating the multi-year programme of the functional commissions (para. 39)

49. The complementarity of the work of the functional commissions related to poverty eradication has been enhanced through efforts to coordinate the multi-year programmes (see sect. II of the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming gender perspectives (E/1997/__), which addresses ways to improve the division of labour among functional commissions).

The role of the Commission for Social Development/identifying task managers (para. 40)

50. The Economic and Social Council adopted the recommendations and decisions proposed by the Commission at its special session to improve its functioning and streamline its agenda so as to reflect the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. The revised agenda was used for the first time at the Commission's 1997 session. Based on that experience, the Commission will decide to maintain or adapt its agenda for its thirty-sixth session. The Secretary-General will take into account the need to ensure adequate Secretariat support to the Commission in the context of the overall review of the structure of the Secretariat in the economic and social fields (see E/CN.5/1997/9, para. 10).

51. The ILO acted as task manager for the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on the priority theme of productive employment and sustainable livelihoods (E/CN.5/1997/3). Other task managers will be identified for the preparation of future priority themes, as appropriate (see E/CN.5/1997/9, para. 11).

Contribution from other functional commissions (paras. 41 and 42)

52. The Commission on Sustainable Development deliberated on chapter 3 of Agenda 21 (Combating poverty) for the first time at its third session, in 1995, when it adopted a comprehensive view of the issue, building upon the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, the International Conference on Population and Development and the outcomes of other relevant meetings. At its fourth session, the Commission on Sustainable Development integrated the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the preparatory work for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) into its overall assessment, and decided in the future to focus its attention on the links between poverty and the environment. The proposed multi-year work programme of

the Commission on Sustainable Development for 1998-2002 each year includes poverty, consumption and production patterns as overriding issues. If adopted, that would also entail considering the links between poverty and such economic sectors as energy and natural resource management.

53. The following inputs were or will be transmitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development from other functional commissions: (a) resolution S-1996/1 adopted by the Commission for Social Development on strategies and actions for the eradication of poverty; (b) agreed conclusions on the theme "Women and the environment" adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women; and (c) the results of the deliberations of the Commission on Population and Development in 1999 on the topic "Population, sustained economic growth and poverty".

The role of the Commission on the Status of Women (para. 43)

54. The review in 1998 of the synthesized report analysing national action plans of Governments will be an opportunity for the Commission on the Status of Women to assess progress in the critical area of concern on women and poverty. A similar assessment can be expected from the comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action in 2000. Both should provide an input into the review and appraisal of the World Summit for Social Development scheduled for that same year (see E/CN.6/1997/6, para. 11).

55. The agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-first session on the theme "Education and training of women", as well as the agreed conclusions to be adopted in 1999 on the theme "Women and health", would be transmitted, as appropriate, to the Commission for Social Development, which will consider issues related to social services at its session of 1999, as well as to the 1999 session of Commission on Population and Development, which will consider the review and appraisal of the ICPD Programme of Action (see also the follow-up to para. 44 of agreed conclusions 1996/1, as set out above).

56. Since the Commission for Social Development usually meets before the Commission on the Status of Women in the same calendar year, the conclusions and recommendations from any expert group meetings organized by the Secretariat in that regard would already be available. Any agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women, however, could be made available to the Commission for Social Development only in the following calendar year (see E/CN.6/1997/6, para. 13).

Cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women and other functional commissions (para. 44)

57. The Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women will contact the chairpersons of other functional commissions of the Council with responsibility for the follow-up of United Nations conferences with a view to considering ways and means to cooperate in reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in areas falling under the mandate of other functional commissions, and to coordinate mutual inputs to discussions by the various functional commissions of priority topics, as appropriate. The Secretariat will bring to the attention of other functional commissions relevant decisions of the

Commission on the Status of Women (see E/CN.6/1997/L.17). The Commission for Social Development has decided to apply a gender perspective in all its deliberations and to review the gender implications of policies being discussed in relation to the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. The Commission on Population and Development also decided that gender would be a special emphasis of its examination on a number of topics in its multi-year work programme.

Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women (para. 45)

58. The Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women will contact the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights with a view to examining the best way to ensure cooperation in the review of the human rights of women. The Commission on the Status of Women has invited the Secretariat to submit a report on that subject to both the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights, in cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights and the Division on the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, with a view to facilitating interaction between the two commissions (see E/CN.6/1997/L.17).

Commission on Population and Development (para. 46)

59. With regard to the Commission on Population and Development, the ICPD Programme of Action reflects the concept of sustainable development and the closely linked concept of poverty eradication. References to poverty and its eradication are interspersed throughout the multi-year work programme of the Commission on Population and Development (see also the follow-up to para. 37 of agreed conclusions 1996/1, as set out above).

Commission on Science and Technology for Development (para. 47)

60. The report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its third session (E/1997/31) will be before the Council at its current session.

Commission on Narcotic Drugs and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (para. 48)

61. The Secretariat will bring to the attention of the Commission for Social Development relevant decisions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for the consideration in 1998 of the priority theme "Promoting social integration and the participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons" and the sub-theme "Violence, crime and the problem of illicit drugs and substance abuse as factors of social disintegration". The Bureau of the Commission for Social Development may consult with the bureaux of those other commissions to consider ways and means to cooperate in that regard (E/CN.5/1997/9, paras. 16 and 17).

Support by ACC mechanisms to the work of functional commissions (paras. 49 and 50)

62. The Task Force on Basic Social Services for All furnished a report to the Commission on Population and Development. In its resolution 1996/7, the Council decided that the task forces should inform the Commission for Social Development and the Council of the progress made in their work for the purpose of system-wide coordination. Accordingly, a second dialogue (the first dialogue was organized at the special session of the Commission in 1996) was organized with the chairpersons of the ACC inter-agency task forces.

63. In its short-term and long-term work programme, IACWGE decided, inter alia, to focus on mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the United Nations system, as well as on the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2000. Those efforts are expected to support the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council in the area of poverty eradication (E/CN.6/1997/6, para. 20).

C. Consideration of common themes by the functional commissions or by the Council

Consideration of the enabling environment (para. 51)

64. At its resumed substantive session of 1996, the Economic and Social Council, by its decision 1996/310, decided that the theme for the high-level segment of its substantive session of 1997 would be "Fostering an enabling environment for development - Financial flows, including capital flows; investment; trade".

1. Integrated national strategies for poverty eradication

Fostering an exchange of national experiences in the Commission for Social Development (para. 52)

65. At its special session, in 1996, the Commission for Social Development considered strategies and actions for the eradication of poverty and adopted resolution S-1996/1, in which it provided numerous recommendations to Governments, the United Nations system and organizations of civil society with respect to eradicating poverty, and also, inter alia, stressed the need to periodically monitor, assess and share information on the performance of poverty eradication plans; evaluate policies to combat poverty; and promote an understanding and awareness of poverty and its causes and consequences.

2. Basic social services as a crucial instrument for poverty eradication

Examination of social services in 1999 (para. 53)

66. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1996/7, decided that the Commission for Social Development, at its session in 1999, will consider the initiation of the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, without reference to a particular focus on education. The conclusions and recommendations of the Commission for Social Development, under the theme of social services for all, which is to be examined at its 1999 session, will be available to the Commission on Population and Development during its session in 2000 due to the scheduling of the two commissions (see E/CN.9/1997/10, para. 9).

Inputs to the Commission for Social Development from the Commission on Human Rights, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Commission on Population and Development and the Commission on the Status of Women (para. 54)

67. The report of the Commission on Human Rights on its session in 1997 will be submitted to the Council. In addition, the final report on human rights and extreme poverty will be conveyed to the Commission for Social Development, as requested by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1997/11 on human rights and extreme poverty. With regard to environmental health and safe drinking water and sanitation, the Commission for Social Development will draw upon the report on the 1997 special session of the General Assembly on the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 (see follow-up to para. 37 of agreed conclusions 1996/1, as set out above).

68. The Secretariat will bring to the attention of the Commission for Social Development relevant decisions of the Commission on Population and Development. The annual reports of the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All submitted to the Commission on Population and Development in 1997 (E/CN.9/1997/4) and to be submitted in 1998 and 1999 may be useful to the Commission for Social Development when it focuses on basic social services at its session in 1999. The outcome of the deliberations of the Commission on the Status of Women could serve as useful inputs to the Commission for Social Development in 1999 on education and training of women in 1997, and in 1998 the review of national action plans in 1998 and the mid-term review of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women (see E/CN.6/1997/6, para. 21).

Review of conference goals by the Commission for Social Development (para. 55)

69. The Secretariat will bring to the attention of the Commission for Social Development relevant decisions of the other functional commissions mentioned by the Council in order to facilitate their contribution to the Commission's discussion of its priority subject at its thirty-seventh session, in 1999. That contribution may include the ongoing work of those commissions with respect to reviewing the achievement of goals and targets set by the relevant international conferences. The documentation requested by the Commission for its thirty-seventh session should also reflect that input (see E/CN.5/1997/9, para. 25).

3. Productive employment

Examination of productive employment and sustainable livelihoods by the Commission for Social Development in 1997 (para. 56)

70. Given the different schedule of sessions of the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women, the conclusions and recommendations of the expert group meeting organized by the Secretariat were made available to the Commission for Social Development but the results of the session of the Commission on the Status of Women itself could not be made available. However, input could be provided to the Commission for Social Development for its review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, beginning in 1999, and the overall review and appraisal in 2000 (see E/CN.6/1997/6, para. 22). As task manager and Chairman of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods, the ILO ensured that the work of the Task Force was fully taken into account in the preparation of the report on that subject to the Commission for Social Development.

4. Vulnerability, social integration and participation of people living in poverty

Examination of social integration by the Commission for Social Development in 1998 (para. 57)

71. The Bureau of the Commission for Social Development may wish to be in contact with the bureaus of the other functional commissions mentioned by the Council in order to facilitate their contribution to the Commission's discussion of its priority subject at its session in 1998. Discussion will focus on three sub-themes: (a) "Promoting social integration through responsive government, full participation in society, non-discrimination, tolerance, equality and social justice"; (b) "Enhancing social protection, reducing vulnerability and enhancing employment opportunities for groups with specific needs"; and (c) "Violence, crime and the problem of illicit drugs and substance abuse as factors of social disintegration". Contributions should include the ongoing work of those commissions in those fields, with particular attention to actions for the eradication of poverty (see E/CN.5/1997/9, para. 27).

5. Statistics

Inputs from the Statistical Commission (para. 58)

72. At its twenty-ninth session, the Statistical Commission endorsed the minimum national social data set (MNSDS), as recommended by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination, with one substitution ("Contraceptive prevalence rate" replaced "Percentage of infants weighing less than 2,500 g at birth, by sex"). The Commission stressed that the indicators in MNSDS should be considered as a minimum and not a maximum list, and invited users to build on it to meet national needs and circumstances, and requirements in specific fields. The Commission agreed that the implementation and use of

MNSDS should be considered at the thirtieth session of the Commission. Use of the data set has been endorsed by the three ACC task forces.

73. The Statistical Commission, at its twenty-ninth session noted the seminar on poverty statistics that was to be convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, in collaboration with other regional commissions, in Santiago from 7 to 9 May 1997. The Commission also noted that a group of experts would meet in Chile, at the time of the seminar referred to above and again in November 1997 in Brazil, to examine technical and professional issues in developing statistics to measure poverty.

74. The Commission on the Status of Women, in accordance with paragraph 58 of agreed conclusions 1996/1, would welcome an input from the Statistical Commission on the statistical implications of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women will contact the Chairperson of the Statistical Commission to examine how such input could be provided in an effective manner (see E/CN.6/1997/L.17).